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Farm Security -

MOBILIZING FARM MANPOWER FOR WAR PRODUCTION

To produce the food needed by the United Nations, American agriculture must put all of its farm land and farm manpower to work.

Only 2,200,000 of the Nation's 6,000,000 farms are producing at or near full capacity. Of the remaining 3,800,000, about 1,300,000 are retired or part-time farmers who can be counted on for little or no food and fiber increases.

This leaves 2,500,000 farmers who are not producing at the full extent of their labor resources but who are available for greater output. In some cases their soil is too poor for efficient production, or their tracts too small to employ their full-time labor. Or they may lack the knowledge and skills to make the best use of their land, or the working capital to finance an adequate farming plan. Nearly all of these farmers reported a gross income of less than \$1,000 in the 1940 Census.

Between 350,000,000 and 400,000,000 man-days of labor are going unused annually on our farms. This is enough manpower to produce every day the equivalent of 200 million pounds of pork, or 25 million gallons of milk, or 2 million dozen eggs.

Some underemployed farmers will go into the armed forces and a larger number could be made available for work in war industries. To bring the remainder into full agricultural production, four things are necessary:

1. The small farmer who can make his greatest contribution on his present farm should be provided with the credit, advice, supervision and other aids he needs to make the best use of his land and labor.
2. The small farmer who is stranded on poor land while good land is available in his own farming area can be helped to acquire a farm on which he can become fully productive, and given such assistance as he needs in carrying out his new undertaking.
3. Small farmers who can serve best by moving to other areas as operators or workers must be informed of such opportunities, given training in the work they are to do and transportation to the place where they are needed.
4. Farm workers needed for seasonal labor must be recruited and transported from areas of available labor to areas of labor need. Some of these will probably stay as year-round workers or operators in their new location. Others will return to the farms from which they were drawn.

As a result of these changes, many of the poorest farms could be retired from cultivation and used as pasturage, forest land, and other constructive purposes. In other cases, small farms vacated by those who leave could be combined for more efficient operation by other small farmers in the community.

Farm Security Helps Small Farmers Become Better Producers

The Farm Security Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture has been charged with the responsibility of utilizing the manpower of small farmers for food production.

For seven years, the Farm Security Administration has been helping hundreds of thousands of low-income farmers improve their resources and their productive abilities through its rehabilitation program. Rehabilitation loans are for farmers who do not have the security to qualify for loans from banks, production credit associations, and other lending institutions. The loans enable them to acquire livestock, machinery, equipment, and other things they need to become better producers. A training program, with the farm as the classroom, goes along with the loans. County farm and home management supervisors consult with the borrowers regularly and help them improve their skills.

From past experience, Farm Security was certain when war came that small farmers could produce much of the increased amounts of food and fiber needed by our armed forces, our allies and workers on the home front.

The 1942 production record of 463,941 actively supervised FSA borrowers bears out the Government's faith in these small farmers. These farmers represent only 7.6 percent of all the farmers in the United States, but they produced 36 percent of the total increased production of milk, 27 percent of the increase in dry beans, 10 percent of the increases in chickens, eggs and peanuts, 9 percent of the increase in pork, and 7 percent of the additional beef and sugar beets raised last year.

Despite the fact that the borrowers lacked the collateral necessary to obtain credit from any other source, repayment figures are equally impressive. Including prepayments, collections on FSA loans had jumped to 92 percent of maturities by December 1, 1942. A total of \$690,133,091 had been loaned up to that time. Of this amount, \$351,029,321 was due on principal and \$322,973,484, including prepayments, had been repaid, plus \$42,527,738 in interest.

Aid in establishing machinery and sire-service co-ops, purchasing and marketing associations, group medical and dental care programs, and long-term, written leases are other Farm Security services which are enabling small farmers to become really effective soldiers in the Nation's agricultural army.

Farm-ownership loans, with which tenants and farm workers can purchase family-type farms under terms of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act, are serving to keep good land in production. These loans also enable small farmers to add enough acres to their farms to furnish full employment for their families.

To meet the need for competent year-round operators and workers to replace farmers on good land who have gone into war industries and the armed forces, Farm Security, in cooperation with the U. S. Office of Education, is supplying tenants and workers from among farmers who have been underemployed, and training them in the special skills they need.

In addition, Farm Security is operating 95 labor supply centers in seasonal crop areas. These centers provide housing, health, and sanitary facilities for thousands of seasonal workers whose labor is now so vitally important to the harvesting of war crops. Up to January 15, FSA had helped to recruit and transport about 11,000 seasonal farm workers.

U. S. Department of Agriculture
Farm Security Administration
February 9, 1943

